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READINGS BOOKLET



GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION

English 30
Part B: Reading

June 1992

Alberta
EDUCATION

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**GRADE 12 DIPLOMA EXAMINATION
ENGLISH 30**

**Part B: Reading
READINGS BOOKLET**

DESCRIPTION

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English 30 Diploma Examination mark.

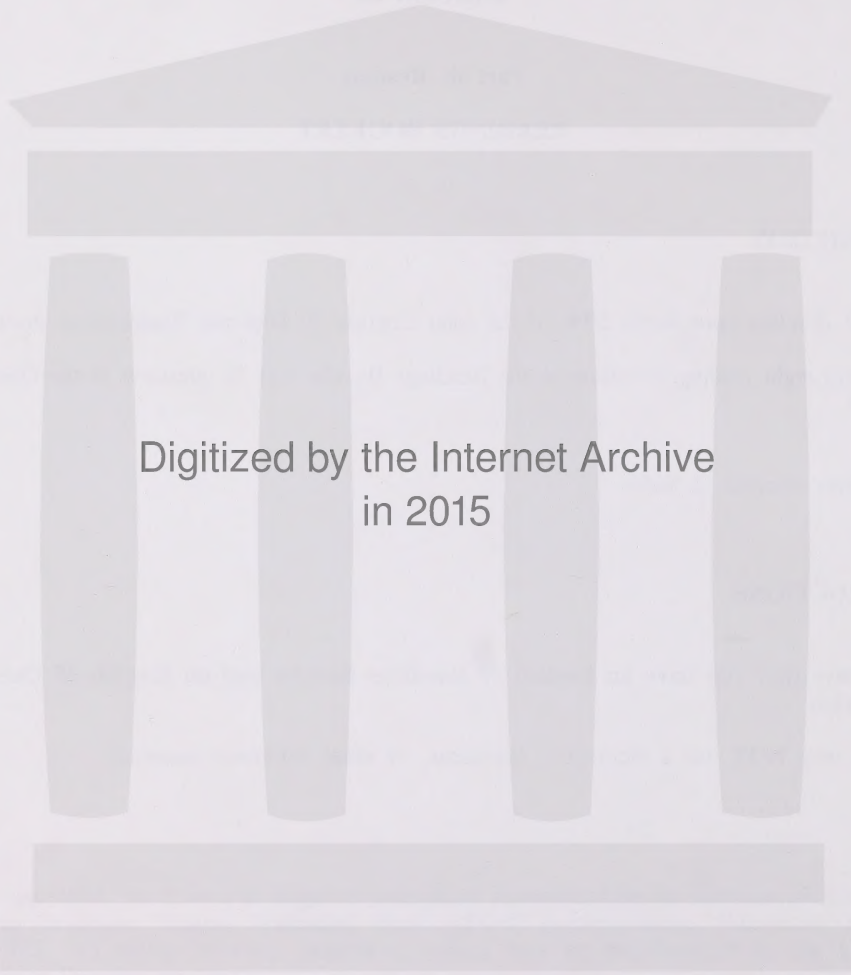
There are eight reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Total time allotted: 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS

- **Be sure that you have an English 30 Readings Booklet and an English 30 Questions Booklet.**
- You may **NOT** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.

JUNE 1992



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I. Questions 1 to 9 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

THE DAYS OF THE UNICORNS

I remember when the unicorns
roved in herds through the meadow
behind the cabin, and how they would
lately pause, tilting their jewelled
5 horns to the falling sun as we shared
the tensions of private property
and the need to be alone.

Or as we walked along the beach
a solitary delicate beast
10 might follow on his soft paws
until we turned and spoke the words
to console him.

It seemed they were always near
ready to show their eyes and stare
15 us down, standing in their creamy
skins, pink tongues out
for our benevolence.

As if they knew that always beyond
and beyond the ladies were weaving them
20 into their spider looms.¹

I knew where they slept
and how the grass was bent
by their own wilderness
and I pitied them.

25 It was only yesterday, or seems
like only yesterday when we could
touch and turn and they came
perfectly real into our fictions.
But they moved on with the courtly sun
30 grazing peacefully beyond the story
horns lowering and lifting and
lowering.

I know this is scarcely credible now
as we cabin ourselves in cold
35 and the motions of panic
and our cells destroy each other
performing music and extinction
and the great dreams pass on
to the common good.

Phyllis Webb
Contemporary Canadian poet

¹the ladies were weaving them / into their spider looms — refers to a famous series of woven tapestries depicting mythical images of unicorns

II. Questions 10 to 18 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from "The Wrong Ism."

from THE WRONG ISM

There are three isms that we ought to consider very carefully — regionalism, nationalism, internationalism. Of these three the one there is most fuss about, the one that starts men shouting and marching and shooting, the one that seems to have all the depth and thrust and fire, is of course nationalism. Nine people out of ten, I fancy, would say that of this trio it is the one that really counts, the big boss. Regionalism and internationalism, they would add, are comparatively small, shadowy, rather cranky. And I believe all this to be quite wrong. Like many another big boss, nationalism is largely bogus. It is like a bunch of flowers made of plastics.

- 10 The real flowers belong to regionalism. The mass of people everywhere may never have used the term. They are probably regionalists without knowing it. Because they have been brought up in a certain part of the world, they have formed perhaps quite unconsciously a deep attachment to its landscape and speech, its traditional customs, its food and drink, its songs and jokes. (There are of course
15 always the rebels, often intellectuals and writers, but they are not the mass of people.) They are rooted in their region. Indeed, without this attachment a man can have no roots.

- So much of people's lives, from earliest childhood onwards, is deeply intertwined with the common life of the region, they cannot help feeling strongly about it. A
20 threat to it is a knife pointing at the heart. How can life ever be the same if bullying strangers come to change everything? The form and colour, the very taste and smell of dear familiar things will be different, alien, life-destroying. It would be better to die fighting. And it is precisely this, the nourishing life of the region, for which common men have so often fought and died.

- 25 If we deduct from nationalism all that it has borrowed or stolen from regionalism, what remains is mostly rubbish. The nation, as distinct from the region, is largely the creation of power-men and political manipulators. Almost all nationalist movements are led by ambitious frustrated men determined to hold office. I am not blaming them. I would do the same if I were in their place and
30 wanted power so badly. But nearly always they make use of the rich warm regional feeling, the emotional dynamo of the movement, while being almost untouched by it themselves. This is because they are not as a rule deeply loyal to any region themselves. Ambition and a love of power can eat like acid into the tissues of regional loyalty. It is hard, if not impossible, to retain a natural piety and yet be
35 for ever playing both ends against the middle.

- Being itself a power structure, devised by men of power, the nation tends to think and act in terms of power. What would benefit the real life of the region, where men, women and children actually live, is soon sacrificed for the power and prestige of the nation. (And the personal vanity of presidents and ministers
40 themselves, which historians too often disregard.) Among the new nations of our time innumerable peasants and labourers must have found themselves being cut down from five square meals a week to three in order to provide unnecessary

Continued

airlines, military forces that can only be used against them and nobody else, great conference halls and official yachts and the rest.

45 This brings me to internationalism. I dislike this term, which I used only to complete the isms. It suggests financiers and dubious promoters living nowhere but in luxury hotels; a shallow world of entrepreneurs and impresarios. The internationalism I have in mind here is best described as world civilisation. It is
50 life considered on a global scale. Most of our communications and transport already exist on this high wide level. So do many other things from medicine to meteorology. Our astronomers and physicists (except where they have allowed themselves to be hush-hushed) work here. The UN special agencies, about which we hear far too little, have contributed more and more to this world civilisation. All the arts, when they are arts and not chunks of nationalist propaganda, naturally take their place
55 in it. And it grows, widens, deepens, in spite of the fact that for every dollar, ruble, pound or franc spent in explaining and praising it, a thousand are spent by the nations explaining and praising themselves.

Nevertheless, we are still backing the wrong ism. Almost all our money goes on the middle one, nationalism, the rotten meat between the two healthy slices of
60 bread. We need regionalism to give us roots and that very depth of feeling which nationalism unjustly and greedily claims for itself. We need internationalism to save the world and to broaden and heighten our civilisation. While regional man enriches the lives that international man is already working to keep secure and healthy, national man, drunk with power, demands our loyalty, money and applause,
65 and poisons the very air with his dangerous nonsense.

J.B. Priestley
British writer (1894-1984)

III. Questions 19 to 27 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the play *Medea*.

from MEDEA

CREON — King of Corinth

MEDEA (pronounced Me dē' a) — a famous sorceress from Colchis, which was an ancient country on the eastern shore of the Black Sea

In Greek legend, MEDEA engineers Jason's escape from Colchis with the golden fleece. MEDEA and Jason flee together to Corinth. Ten years have passed and Jason has deserted MEDEA and their two children in order to marry CREON's daughter. MEDEA is enraged. Fearing for his daughter's safety, CREON confronts MEDEA.

CREON: Thou woman sullen-eyed and hot with hate

Against thy lord, Medea, I here command

That thou and thy two children from this land

Go forth to banishment. Make no delay;

5 Seeing ourselves, the King, are come this day

To see our charge fulfilled; nor shall again

Look homeward ere we have led thy children twain

And thee beyond our realm's last boundary.

MEDEA: Lost! Lost!

10 Mine haters at the helm with sail flung free

Pursuing; and for us no beach nor shore

In the endless waters! . . . Yet, though stricken sore,

I still will ask thee, for what crime, what thing

Unlawful, wilt thou cast me out, O King?

15 CREON: What crime? I fear thee, woman — little need

To cloak my reasons — lest thou work some deed

Of darkness on my child. And in that fear

Reasons enough have part. Thou comest here

A wise-woman confessed, and full of lore

20 In unknown ways of evil. Thou art sore

In heart, being parted from thy lover's arms.

And more, thou hast made menace . . . so the alarms

But now have reached mine ear . . . on bride and groom,

And him who gave the bride, to work thy doom

25 Of vengeance. Which, ere yet it be too late,

I sweep aside. I choose to earn thine hate

Of set will now, not palter¹ with the mood

Of mercy, and hereafter weep in blood.

MEDEA: 'T is not the first nor second time, O King,

30 That fame hath hurt me, and come nigh to bring

My ruin How can any man, whose eyes

Are wholesome, seek to rear his children wise

Continued

¹palter — pretend, act insincerely

Beyond men's wont? Much helplessness in arts
 Of common life, and in their townsmen's hearts
 35 Envy deep-set . . . so much their learning brings!
 Come unto fools with knowledge of new things,
 They deem it vanity, not knowledge. Aye,
 And men that erst² for wisdom were held high,
 Feel thee a thorn to fret them, privily
 40 Held higher than they. So hath it been with me.
 A wise-woman I am; and for that sin
 To divers ill names men would pen me in;
 A seed of strife,³ an eastern dreamer; one
 Of brand not theirs; one hard to play upon . . .
 45 Ah, I am not so wondrous wise! And now,
 To thee, I am terrible! What fearest thou?
 What dire deed? Do I tread so proud a path —
 Fear me not thou! — that I should brave the wrath
 Of princes? Thou: what hast thou ever done
 50 To wrong me? Granted thine own child to one
 Whom thy soul chose. — Ah, *him* out of my heart
 I hate; but thou, meseems, hast done thy part
 Not ill. And for thine houses' happiness
 I hold no grudge. Go: marry,⁴ and God bless
 55 Your issues. Only suffer me to rest
 Somewhere within this land. Though sore oppressed,
 I will be still, knowing mine own defeat.

CREON: Thy words be gentle: but I fear me yet

Lest even now there creep some wickedness
 60 Deep hid within thee. And for that the less
 I trust thee now than ere these words began.
 A woman quick of wrath, aye, or a man,
 Is easier watching than the cold and still.
 Up, straight, and find thy road! Mock not my will
 65 With words. This doom is passed beyond recall;
 Nor all thy crafts shall help thee, being withal
 My manifest foe, to linger at my side.

MEDEA (*Suddenly throwing herself down and clinging to CREON*): Oh, by thy knees!⁵ By that new-wedded bride . . .

70 **CREON:** 'T is waste of words. Thou shalt not weaken me.

MEDEA: Wilt hunt me? Spurn me when I kneel to thee?

CREON: 'T is mine own house that kneels to me, not thou.

MEDEA: Home, my lost home, how I desire thee now!

CREON: And I mine, and my child, beyond all things.

75 **MEDEA:** O Loves of man, what curse is on your wings!

CREON: Blessing or curse, 't is as their chances flow.

Continued

²erst — erstwhile, once

³A seed of strife — potential danger

⁴Go: marry — condone the marriage of Jason and your daughter

⁵by thy knees — refers to the belief that a person would be protected by touching the knees of one in authority

- MEDEA:** Remember, Zeus, the cause of all this woe!
CREON: Oh, rid me of my pains! Up, get thee gone!
MEDEA: What would I with thy pains? I have my own.
80 **CREON:** Up: or, 'fore God, my soldiers here shall fling . . .
MEDEA: Not that! Not that! . . . I do but pray, O King . . .
CREON: Thou wilt not? I must face the harsher task?
MEDEA: I accept mine exile. 'T is not that I ask.
CREON: Why then so wild? Why clinging to mine hand?
85 **MEDEA** (*Rising*): For one day only leave me in thy land
At peace, to find some counsel, ere the strain
Of exile fall, some comfort for these twain,
Mine innocents; since others take no thought,
It seems, to save the babes that they begot.
90 Ah! Thou wilt pity them! Thou also art
A father: thou hast somewhere still a heart
That feels . . . I reckon not of myself: 't is they
That break me, fallen upon so dire a day.
CREON: Mine is no tyrant's mood. Aye, many a time
95 Ere this my tenderness hath marred the chime
Of wisest counsels. And I know that now
I do mere folly. But so be it! Thou
Shalt have this grace . . . But this I warn thee clear,
If once the morrow's sunlight find thee here
100 Within my borders, thee or child of thine,
Thou diest! . . . Of this judgment not a line
Shall waver nor abate. So linger on,
If thou needs must, till the next risen sun;
No further . . . In one day there scarce can be
105 Those perils wrought whose dread yet haunteth me.

Euripides

Translated from the Greek
by Gilbert Murray

IV. Questions 28 to 35 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the novel *The Diviners*.

from THE DIVINERS

The river flowed both ways. The current moved from north to south, but the wind usually came from the south, rippling the bronze-green water in the opposite direction. This apparently impossible contradiction, made apparent and possible, still fascinated Morag, even after the years of river-watching.

5 The dawn mist had lifted, and the morning air was filled with swallows, darting so low over the river that their wings sometimes brushed the water, then spiralling and pirouetting upward again. Morag watched, trying to avoid thought, but this play was not successful.

10 Pique had gone away. She must have left during the night. She had left a note on the kitchen table, which also served as Morag's desk, and had stuck the sheet of paper into the typewriter, where Morag would be certain to find it.

15 Now please do not get all uptight, Ma. I can look after myself. Am going west. Alone, at least for now. If Gord phones, tell him I've drowned and gone floating down the river, crowned with algae and dead minnows, like Ophelia.

20 Well, you had to give the girl some marks for style of writing. Slightly derivative, perhaps, but let it pass. It was not funny. Pique was eighteen. Only. Not dry behind the ears. Yes, she was, though. If only there hadn't been that other time when Pique took off, that really bad time. That wouldn't happen again, not like before. Morag was pretty sure it wouldn't. Not sure enough, probably.

I've got too much work in hand to fret over Pique. Lucky me. I've got my work to take my mind off my life. At forty-seven that's not such a terrible state of affairs. If I hadn't been a writer, I might've been a first-rate mess at this point. Don't knock the trade.

25 Morag read Pique's letter again, made coffee and sat looking out at the river, which was moving quietly, its surface wrinkled by the breeze, each crease of water outlined by the sun. Naturally, the river wasn't wrinkled or creased at all — wrong words, implying something unfluid like skin, something unenduring, prey to age. Left to itself, the river would probably go on like this, flowing deep, for another 30 million or so years. That would not be allowed to happen. In bygone days, Morag had once believed that nothing could be worse than killing a person. Now she perceived river-slaying as something worse. No wonder the kids felt themselves to be children of the apocalypse.¹

35 No boats today. Yes, one. Royland was out, fishing for muskie. Seventy-four years old this year, Royland. Eyesight terrible, but he was too stubborn to wear glasses. A marvel that he could go on working. Of course, his work did not

Continued

¹apocalypse — a prophesy of a violent upheaval during which evil forces will be destroyed

depend upon eyesight. Some other kind of sight. A water diviner.² Morag always felt she was about to learn something of great significance from him, something which would explain everything. But things remained mysterious, his work, her
40 own, the generations, the river.

Across the river, the clumps of willow bent silver-green down to the water, and behind them the great maples and oaks stirred a little, their giant dark green tranquility disturbed only slightly by the wind. There were more dead elms this year, dry bones, the grey skeletons of trees. Soon there would be no elms left.

45 The swallows dipped and spun over the water, a streaking of blue-black wings and bright breastfeathers. How could that colour be caught in words? A sort of rosy peach colour, but that sounded corny and was also inaccurate.

I used to think words could do anything. Magic. Sorcery. Even miracle. But no, only occasionally.

50 The house seemed too quiet. Dank. The kitchen had that sour milk and stale bread smell that Morag remembered from her childhood, and which she loathed. There was, however, no sour milk or stale bread here — it must be all in the head, emanating from the emptiness of the place. Until recently the house was full, not only Pique but A-Okay Smith and Maudie and their shifting but ever-
55 large tribe. Morag, for the year when the Smiths lived here, had gone around torn between affection and rage — how could anyone be expected to work in such a madhouse, and here she was feeding them all, more or less, and no money would be coming in if she didn't get back to the typewriter. Now, of course, she wished some of them were here again. True, they only lived across the river, now
60 that they had their own place, and visited often, so perhaps that was enough.

Something about Pique's going, apart from the actual departure itself, was unresolved in Morag's mind. The fact that Pique was going west? Yes. Morag was both glad and uncertain. What would Pique's father think, if he knew? Well, he wouldn't know and didn't have all that much right to judge anyway. Would
65 Pique go to Manawaka? If she did, would she find anything there which would have meaning for her? Morag rose, searched the house, finally found what she was looking for.

These photographs from the past never agreed to get lost. Odd, because she had tried hard enough, over the years, to lose them, or thought she had. She had
70 treated them carelessly, shoved them away in seldom-opened suitcases or in dresser drawers filled with discarded underwear, scorning to put them in anything as neat as an album. They were jammed any-old-how into an ancient tattered manilla envelope that Christie had given her once when she was a kid, and which said *McVitie & Pearl, Barristers & Solicitors, Manawaka, Manitoba*. Christie must have
75 found it at the dump — the Nuisance Grounds, as they were known; what an incredible name, when you thought of the implications. The thick brown paper stank a bit when Christie had handed it to her, faintly like the sweetish ether smell of spoiled fruit. He said Morag could have it to keep her pictures in, and she had taken it, although despising it, because she did not have any other sturdy

Continued

²a water diviner — one who can predict the presence of water beneath the earth by holding a live branch of wood or a metal rod. The rod turns in the hands of the diviner over the spot where the water flows.

80 envelope for the few and valued snapshots she owned then. Not realizing that if she had chucked them out, then and there, her skull would prove an envelope quite sturdy enough to retain them.

*I've kept them, of course, because something in me doesn't want to lose them, or perhaps doesn't dare. Perhaps they're my totems,³ or contain a portion of my
85 spirit. Yeh, and perhaps they are exactly what they seem to be — a jumbled mess of old snapshots which I'll still be lugging along with me when I'm an old lady, clutching them as I enter or am shoved into the Salvation Army Old People's Home or wherever it is that I'll find my death.*

90 Morag put the pictures into chronological order. As though there were really any chronological order, or any order at all, if it came to that. She was not certain whether the people in the snapshots were legends she had once dreamed only, or were as real as anyone she now knew.

I keep the snapshots not for what they show but for what is hidden in them.

Margaret Laurence
Canadian fiction writer (1926-1987)

³*totems* — animals, plants, or objects that serve as symbols of a clan or family

V. Questions 36 to 45 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the play *King Richard the Second*, Act I, Scene iii.

from **KING RICHARD THE SECOND**, Act I, Scene iii

CHARACTERS:

KING — Richard the Second of England

BOLINGBROKE — Duke of Hereford, son of John of Gaunt and cousin to the King

MOWBRAY — Duke of Norfolk

AUMERLE — nephew of the King

JOHN OF GAUNT — Duke of Lancaster, aged uncle of the King

MARSHAL — one of the King's attendant lords

The King has just interceded in a duel between Bolingbroke and Mowbray, who have accused each other of being traitors to the King and therefore to England. To prevent bloodshed, Richard has ordered that both men be banished from England — Bolingbroke for ten years, Mowbray forever.

KING: Lay on our royal sword your banish'd hands;

Swear by the duty that you owe to God

(Our part therein we banish with yourselves)

To keep the oath that we administer:

5 You never shall, so help you truth and God,

Embrace each other's love in banishment;

Nor never look upon each other's face;

Nor never write, regreet, nor reconcile

This low'ring tempest of your home-bred hate;

10 Nor never by advised purpose meet

To plot, contrive, or complot any ill

'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land.

BOLINGBROKE: I swear.

MOWBRAY: And I, to keep all this.

15 **BOLINGBROKE:** Norfolk, so far as to mine enemy:

By this time, had the King permitted us,

One of our souls had wand'ring in the air,

Banish'd this frail sepulchre of our flesh,

As now our flesh is banish'd from this land.

20 Confess thy treasons ere thou fly the realm.

Since thou hast far to go, bear not along

The clogging burthen of a guilty soul.

MOWBRAY: No, Bolingbroke. If ever I were traitor,

My name be blotted from the book of life

25 And I from heaven banish'd as from hence!

But what thou art, God, thou, and I do know;

And all too soon, I fear, the King shall rue.

Farewell, my liege. Now no way can I stray.

Save back to England, all the world's my way.

Exit.

30 **KING:** Uncle, even in the glasses of thine eyes

I see thy grieved heart. Thy sad aspect

Hath from the number of his banish'd years

Pluck'd four away. (To **BOLINGBROKE**) Six frozen winters spent,

Continued

- Return with welcome home from banishment.
- 35 **BOLINGBROKE**: How long a time lies in one little word!
 Four lagging winters and four wanton springs
 End in a word, such is the breath of kings.
- JOHN OF GAUNT**: I thank my liege that in regard of me
 He shortens four years of my son's exile.
- 40 But little vantage shall I reap thereby;
 For ere the six years that he hath to spend
 Can change their moons and bring their times about,
 My oil-dried lamp and time-bewasted light
 Shall be extinct with age and endless night,
- 45 My inch of taper will be burnt and done,
 And blindfold death not let me see my son.
- KING**: Why, uncle, thou hast many years to live.
- JOHN OF GAUNT**: But not a minute, King, that thou canst give.
 Shorten my days thou canst with sullen sorrow
- 50 And pluck nights from me, but not lend a morrow.
 Thou canst help time to furrow me with age,
 But stop no wrinkle in his pilgrimage.
 Thy word is current with him for my death,
 But dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath.
- 55 **KING**: Thy son is banish'd upon good advice,
 Whereto thy tongue a party-verdict gave.
 Why at our justice seem'st thou then to low'r?
- JOHN OF GAUNT**: Things sweet to taste prove in digestion sour.
 You urg'd me as a judge; but I had rather
- 60 You would have bid me argue like a father.
 O, had it been a stranger, not my child,
 To smooth his fault I should have been more mild.
 A partial slander sought I to avoid,
 And in the sentence my own life destroy'd.
- 65 Alas, I look'd when some of you should say
 I was too strict to make mine own away;
 But you gave leave to my unwilling tongue
 Against my will to do myself this wrong.
- KING**: Cousin, farewell; and, uncle, bid him so.
- 70 Six years we banish him, and he shall go.
- Flourish. Exuent (KING with his Train)*
- AUMERLE**: Cousin, farewell. What presence must not know,
 From where you do remain let paper show.
- MARSHAL**: My lord, no leave take I; for I will ride,
- 75 As far as land will let me, by your side.
- JOHN OF GAUNT**: O, to what purpose dost thou hoard thy words
 That thou returnest no greeting to thy friends?
- BOLINGBROKE**: I have too few to take my leave of you,
 When the tongue's office should be prodigal¹
- 80 To breathe the abundant dolour² of the heart.
- JOHN OF GAUNT**: Thy grief is but thy absence for a time.
- BOLINGBROKE**: Joy absent, grief is present for that time.

Continued

¹prodigal — lavish, profuse, extravagant

²dolour — gloom, sorrow, woe

JOHN OF GAUNT: What is six winters? They are quickly gone.

BOLINGBROKE: To men in joy; but grief makes one hour ten.

85 **JOHN OF GAUNT:** Call it a travel that thou tak'st for pleasure.

BOLINGBROKE: My heart will sigh when I miscall it so,
Which finds it an enforced pilgrimage.

JOHN OF GAUNT: The sullen passage of thy weary steps
Esteem as foil wherein thou are to set

90 The precious jewel of thy home return.

BOLINGBROKE: Nay, rather every tedious stride I make
Will but remember me what a deal of world

I wander from the jewels that I love.

Must I not serve a long apprenticeship

95 To foreign passages and, in the end,

Having my freedom, boast of nothing else

But that I was a journeyman to grief?

JOHN OF GAUNT: All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.

100 Teach thy necessity to reason thus:

There is no virtue like necessity.

Think not the King did banish thee,

But thou the King. Woe doth the heavier sit

Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.

105 Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honour,

And not, the King exil'd thee; or suppose

Devouring pestilence hangs in our air

And thou art flying to a fresher clime.

Look, what thy soul holds dear, imagine it

110 To lie that way thou goest, not whence thou com'st.

Suppose the singing birds musicians,

The grass whereon thou tread'st the presence strow'd,

The flowers fair ladies, and thy steps no more

Than a delightful measure or a dance;

115 For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite

The man that mocks at it and sets it light.

BOLINGBROKE: O, who can hold a fire in his hand

By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?³

Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite

120 By bare imagination of a feast?

Or wallow naked in December snow

By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?

O, no! The apprehension of the good

Gives but the greater feeling to the worse.

125 Fell sorrow's tooth doth never rankle more

Than when he bites, but lanceth not the sore.

JOHN OF GAUNT: Come, come, my son, I'll bring thee on thy way.

Had I thy youth and cause, I would not stay.

BOLINGBROKE: Then, England's ground, farewell; sweet soil, adieu,

130 My mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet!

Where'er I wander, boast of this I can,

Though banish'd, yet a trueborn English man.

Exeunt.

William Shakespeare

³Caucasus — a mountain range in southeastern Europe

VI. Questions 46 to 53 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from the essay “The Enigma of the Inherited Image.”

from THE ENIGMA OF THE INHERITED IMAGE

A number of popular moving-picture films have shown the amazing phenomenon of the laying and hatching of the eggs of the sea turtle. The female leaves the water and crawls to a point on the beach safely above the tide line, where she digs a hole, deposits hundreds of eggs, covers the nest, and turns back to the sea. After eighteen days a multitude of tiny turtles come flipping up through the sand and, like a field of sprinters at the crack of the gun, make for the heavily crashing waves as fast as they can, while gulls drop screaming from overhead to pick them off.

No more vivid representation could be desired of spontaneity and the quest for the not-yet-seen. There is no question here of learning, trial-and-error; nor are the tiny things afraid of the great waves. They know that they must hurry, know how to do it, and know precisely where they are going. And finally, when they enter the sea, they know immediately both how to swim and that swim they must.

Students of animal behavior have coined the term “innate releasing mechanism” (IRM) to designate the inherited structure in the nervous system that enables an animal to respond thus to a circumstance never experienced before, and the factor triggering the response they term a “sign stimulus” or “releaser.” It is obvious that the living entity responding to such a sign cannot be said to be the individual, since the individual has had no previous knowledge of the object to which it is reacting. The recognizing and responding subject is, rather, some sort of trans- or super-individual, inhabiting and moving the living creature. Let us not speculate here about the metaphysics of this mystery; for, as Schopenhauer¹ sagely remarks in his paper on *The Will in Nature*, “we are sunk in a sea of riddles and inscrutables, knowing and understanding neither what is around us nor ourselves.”

Chicks with their eggshells still adhering to their tails dart for cover when a hawk flies overhead, but not when the bird is a gull or duck, heron or pigeon. Furthermore, if the wooden model of a hawk is drawn over their coop on a wire, they react as though it were alive — unless it be drawn backward, when there is no response.

Here we have an extremely precise image — never seen before, yet recognized with reference not merely to its form but to its form in motion, and linked, furthermore, to an immediate, unplanned, unlearned, and even unintended system of appropriate action: flight, to cover. The image of the inherited enemy is already sleeping in the nervous system, and along with it the well-proven reaction. Furthermore, even if all the hawks in the world were to vanish, their image would still sleep in the soul of the chick — never to be roused, however, unless by some accident of art; for example, a repetition of the clever experiment of the wooden hawk on a wire. With that (for a certain number of generations, at any rate) the obsolete reaction of the flight to cover would recur: and, unless we knew about the earlier danger of hawks to chicks, we should find the sudden eruption difficult to explain. “Whence,” we might ask, “this abrupt seizure by an image

Continued

¹Schopenhauer — a famous 19th century German philosopher

to which there is no counterpart in the chicken's world? Living gulls and ducks, herons and pigeons, leave it cold; but the work of art strikes some very deep chord!"

- 45 Have we here a clue to the problem of the image of the witch in the nervous system of the child? Some psychologists would say so. C.G. Jung, for example, identifies two fundamentally different systems of unconsciously motivated response in the human being. One he terms the personal unconscious. It is based on a context of forgotten, neglected, or suppressed memory images derived from personal
- 50 experience (infantile impressions, shocks, frustrations, satisfactions, etc.), such as Sigmund Freud recognized and analyzed in his therapy. The other he names the collective unconscious. Its contents — which he calls archetypes — are just such images as that of the hawk in the nervous system of the chick. No one has yet been able to tell us how it got there; but there it is!

Joseph Campbell

American writer and scholar (1904-1987)

VII. Questions 54 to 61 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

THE CHILDREN OF PHOTOGRAPHERS

Hand on hip, against the wind-swept trees
(those confident flicks of Gainsborough's wrist)
the Blue Boy¹ poses
unconvinced of his background.

5 Master Jonathan Butthall, given this mirror
into which (how many times?) he gazed
seeking the confirmation of that arrogant charm
which gave him immortality
(longevity at least)

10 on the lids of a million candy tins

given this mirror, then, by parents
who could afford to pay: this one reflection,
solitary image of the vanished years
when he could turn his back on such a wilderness
15 and seek no mirror but his own brown eyes.

But we who are the children of photographers
inherit our images daily, watching them
develop in a safe red light.
Arranged in albums, framed by our bedside,
20 the pictures of our age and youth surround us
shattering mirrors into kaleidoscopes
and catching us
forever glancing over our shoulders
afraid of the storm in the treetops.

25 The hand has left the hip now;
we use it to cover our eyes.
We have seen ourselves too often
to believe in any image's security.
Our eyes have grown hard
30 from gazing into cameras; the darkroom
hides us from nobody's mirror
not even our own.

It would be more honest to photograph
only the backs of our heads
35 as we turn to face that confident
sketch of a storm.

Stephen Scobie
Contemporary Canadian poet

¹the Blue Boy — a famous painting of young Jonathan Butthall, dressed in blue and posed against a background of windswept trees. Painted by Gainsborough, 18th century English portrait painter.

VIII. Questions 62 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this short story.

THE LAST LESSON

This story is set in the province of Alsace, France, about 1871, during the time of the German takeover at the end of the Franco-Prussian War.

That morning it was quite late before I started for school, and I was terribly afraid I should be scolded, for Monsieur Hamel had told us that he would question us upon participles,¹ and I did not know the first thing about them. For a moment I thought of escaping from school and roving through the fields.

5 The day was so warm, so clear! The blackbirds were whistling on the outskirts of the woods. In Rippert Meadow, behind the sawmill, the Prussians were drilling. All these things were far more attractive to me than the rule for the use of participles. But I mustered up strength to resist temptation, and hurried on to school.

10 As I reached the town hall, I saw a group of people; they loitered before the little grating, reading the placards posted upon it. For two years every bit of bad news had been announced to us from that grating. There we read what battles had been lost, what requisitions made; there we learned what orders had issued from headquarters. And though I did not pause with the rest, I wondered to myself,
15 “What can be the matter now?”

As I ran across the square, Wachter, the blacksmith, who, in company with his apprentice, was absorbed in reading the notice, exclaimed, —

“Not so fast, child! You will reach your school soon enough!”

I believed he was making game of me, and I was quite out of breath when
20 I entered Monsieur Hamel’s small domain.

Now, at the beginning of the session there was usually such an uproar that it could be heard as far as the street. Desks were opened and shut, lessons recited at the top of our voices, all shouting together, each of us stopping his ears that he might hear better. Then the master’s big ruler would descend upon his desk,
25 and he would say, —

“Silence!”

I counted upon making my entrance in the midst of the usual babel and reaching my seat unobserved, but upon this particular morning all was hushed. Sabbath stillness reigned. Through the open window I could see that my comrades
30 had already taken their seats; I could see Monsieur Hamel himself, passing back and forth, his formidable iron ruler under his arm.

I must open that door. I must enter in the midst of that deep silence. I need not tell you that I grew red in the face, and terror seized me.

But, strangely enough, as Monsieur Hamel scrutinized me, there was no anger
35 in his gaze. He said very gently, —

“Take your seat quickly, my little Franz. We were going to begin without you.”

I climbed over the bench, and seated myself. But when I had recovered a little from my fright, I noticed that our master had donned his beautiful green

Continued

¹participles — words that function as both verb and adjective

40 frock-coat, his finest frilled shirt, and his embroidered black silk calotte,² which he wore only on inspection days, or upon those occasions when prizes were distributed. Moreover, an extraordinary solemnity had taken possession of my classmates. But the greatest surprise of all came when my eye fell upon the benches at the farther end of the room. Usually they were empty, but upon this morning
45 the villagers were seated there, solemn as ourselves. There sat old Hauser, with his three-cornered hat, there sat the venerable mayor, the aged carrier, and other personages of importance. All of our visitors seemed sad, and Hauser had brought with him an old primer, chewed at the edges. It lay wide open upon his knees, his big spectacles reposing upon the page.

50 While I was wondering at all these things, Monsieur Hamel had taken his seat, and in the same grave and gentle tone in which he had greeted me, he said to us, —

“My children, this is the last day I shall teach you. The order has come from Berlin that henceforth in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine all instruction
55 shall be given in the German tongue only. Your new master will arrive to-morrow. To-day you hear the last lesson you will receive in French, and I beg you will be most attentive.”

My “last” French lesson! And I scarcely knew how to write! Now I should never learn. My education must be cut short. How I grudged at that moment every
60 minute I had lost, every lesson I had missed for the sake of hunting birds’ nests or making slides upon the Saar! And those books which a moment before were so dry and dull, so heavy to carry, my grammar, my Bible-history, seemed now to wear the faces of old friends, whom I could not bear to bid farewell. It was with them as with Monsieur Hamel, the thought that he was about to leave, that
65 I should see him no more, made me forget all the blows of his ruler, and the many punishments I had received.

Poor man! It was in honor of that last session that he was arrayed in his finest Sunday garb, and now I began to understand why the villagers had gathered at the back of the class-room. Their presence at such a moment seemed to express
70 a regret that they had not visited that school-room oftener; it was their way of telling our master they thanked him for his forty years of faithful service, and desired to pay their respects to the land whose empire was departing.

I was busied with these reflections when I heard my name called. It was now my turn to recite. Ah! what would I not have given then, had I been able to
75 repeat from beginning to end that famous rule for the use of participles loudly, distinctly, and without a single mistake; but I became entangled in the first few words, and remained standing at my seat, swinging from side to side, my heart swelling. I dared not raise my head. Monsieur Hamel was addressing me.

“I shall not chide thee, my little Franz; thy punishment will be great enough.
80 So it is! We say to ourselves each day, ‘Bah! I have time enough. I will learn to-morrow.’ And now see what results. Ah, it has ever been the greatest misfortune to our Alsace that she was willing to put off learning till To-morrow! And now these foreigners can say to us, and justly, ‘What! you profess to be Frenchmen,

Continued

²calotte — a cap or hood

and can neither speak nor write your own language?’ And in all this, my poor
85 Franz, you are not the chief culprit. Each of us has something to reproach himself
with.

“Your parents have not shown enough anxiety about having you educated.
They preferred to see you spinning, or tilling the soil, since that brought them in
a few more sous. And have I nothing with which to reproach myself? Did I not
90 often send you to water my garden when you should have been at your tasks?
And if I wished to go trout-fishing, was my conscience in the least disturbed when
I gave you a holiday?”

One topic leading to another, Monsieur Hamel began to speak of the French
language, saying it was the strongest, clearest, most beautiful language in the
95 world, which we must keep as our heritage, never allowing it to be forgotten,
telling us that when a nation has become enslaved, she holds the key which shall
unlock her prison as long as she preserves her native tongue.

Then he took a grammar, and read our lesson to us, and I was amazed to
see how well I understood. Everything he said seemed so very simple, so easy!
100 I had never, I believe, listened to any one as I listened to him at that moment,
and never before had he shown so much patience in his explanations. It really
seemed as if the poor man, anxious to impart everything he knew before he took
leave of us, desired to strike a single blow that might drive all his knowledge
into our heads at once.

105 The lesson was followed by writing. For this occasion Monsieur Hamel had
prepared some copies that were entirely new, and upon these were written in a
beautiful round hand, “*France, Alsace! France, Alsace!*”

These words were as inspiring as the sight of the tiny flags attached to the
rod of our desks. It was good to see how each one applied himself, and how
110 silent it was! Not a sound save the scratching of pens as they touched our papers.
Once, indeed, some cockchafers³ entered the room, but no one paid the least
attention to them, not even the tiniest pupil; for the youngest were absorbed in
tracing their straight strokes as earnestly and conscientiously as if these too were
written in French! On the roof of the schoolhouse the pigeons were cooing softly,
115 and I thought to myself as I listened, “And must they also be compelled to sing
in German?”

From time to time, looking up from my page, I saw Monsieur Hamel,
motionless in his chair, his eyes riveted upon each object about him, as if he
desired to fix in his mind, and forever, every detail of his little school. Remember
120 that for forty years he had been constantly at his post, in that very school-room,
facing the same playground. Little had changed. The desks and benches were
polished and worn, through long use; the walnut-trees in the playground had grown
taller, and the hop-vine he himself had planted curled its tendrils about the windows,
running even to the roof. What anguish must have filled the poor man’s heart, as
125 he thought of leaving all these things, and heard his sister moving to and fro in
the room overhead, busied in fastening their trunks! For on the morrow they were
to leave the country, never to return. Nevertheless his courage did not falter; not
a single lesson was omitted. After writing came history, and then the little ones
sang their “*Ba, Be, Bi, Bo, Bu,*” together. Old Hauser, at the back of the room,

Continued

³cockchafers — May bugs, beetles

130 had put on his spectacles, and, holding his primer in both hands, was spelling out the letters with the little ones. He too was absorbed in his task; his voice trembled with emotion, and it was so comical to hear him that we all wanted to laugh and to cry at the same moment. Ah! never shall I forget that last lesson!

Suddenly the church clock struck twelve, and then the Angelus⁴ was heard.

135 At the same moment, a trumpet-blast under our window announced that the Prussians were returning from drill. Monsieur Hamel rose in his chair. He was very pale, but never before had he seemed to me so tall as at that moment.

“My friends —” he said, “my friends — I — I —”

But something choked him. He could not finish his sentence.

140 Then he took a piece of chalk, and grasping it with all his strength, wrote in his largest hand, —

“VIVE LA FRANCE!”

He remained standing at the blackboard, his head resting against the wall. He did not speak again, but a motion of his hand said to us, —

145 “That is all. You are dismissed.”

Alphonse Daudet
19th century French writer

⁴Angelus — a bell sounding the hour for morning, noon, or evening prayer

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